CLAIMS:

1. A method of searching for programme content, characterized in that the method comprises the steps of:

(a) providing a communication network (10) comprising a plurality of mutually interconnected network nodes (100, 110) susceptible to storing programme data content and at least one of electronic programme guides (EPG) and associated meta-data thereat;

(b) providing at least one user-operable node (20) coupled to the network (10), the at least one user-operable node (20) including user-interfacing means (30, 50) for receiving instructions from a user (60) and presenting results to the user (60);

(c) arranging for the plurality of network nodes (100) and/or the at least one user-operable node (20) to access electronic programme guide (EPG) data and/or associated meta-data providing a record of at least previous programme data content communicated within the network (10);

(d) presenting one or more electronic programme guides (EPG) to the user for generating therefrom a search request susceptible to utilizing meta-data associated with the one or more electronic programme guides (EPG) for use in identifying corresponding data content available in the network (10); and

(e) receiving at the at least one user-operable node (20) data content corresponding to the search request.

2. A method according to claim 1, wherein the network (10) is arranged to have stored therein electronic programme guide data (EPG) corresponding to previously communicated programme data content as well as present and future programme data content to be communicated through the network (10).

3. A method according to claim 1, wherein the user-operable node (20) augments the electronic programme guides (EPG) and/or their associated meta-data including data pertaining to past programme data content for use in determining location data indicative of whether the programme data content is available locally in the at least one user-operable node (20) or in the plurality of nodes of the network (10).

4. A method according to claim 3, wherein the presented EPG relating to previously broadcast programme data content broadcast is presented to the user, preferably in a GUI format, with an indication of which programme data content is known to be stored locally or within the network.

5. A method according to claim 1, wherein the electronic programme data (EPG) relating to previously communicated programme data content within the network (10) searched in response to the search request corresponds to programme data content communicated not more than a pre-defined period, preferably 1 month, prior to issuance of the search request from the at least one user-operable node (20).

6. A method according to claim 1, wherein the network (20) is arranged to include at least one data server (110) for providing data relating to electronic programme guides (EPG) and/or programme data content.

7. A method according to claim 1, wherein at least a subset of the electronic programme guide (EPG) data and/or its associated meta-data and/or programme data content are stored in mutually different parts of the network (10).

8. A method according to claim 1, wherein the network nodes (100) are configured in a manner of a peer-to-peer network.

9. A method according to claim 1, wherein at least one of the network nodes (110) and the at least one user-operable node (20) each include a hard disc drive (40) for storing programme data content and/or electronic programme guide (EPG) data therein.

10. A communication network (10) operable to search for programme content, characterized in that the network (10) comprises:

(a) a plurality of mutually interconnected network nodes (100, 110) susceptible to storing programme data content and at least one of electronic programme guides (EPG) and associated meta-data thereat;

(b) at least one user-operable node (20) coupled to the network (10), the at least one user-operable node (20) including user-interfacing means (30, 50) for receiving instructions from a user (60) and presenting results to the user (60),

the network (10) being arranged such that:

(c) the plurality of network nodes (100) and/or the at least one user-operable node (20) are operable to access electronic programme guide (EPG) data and/or associated meta-data providing a record of at least previous programme data content communicated within the network (10);

(d) the network (10) is operable to present one or more electronic programme guides (EPG) to the user (60) for generating therefrom a search request susceptible to utilizing meta-data associated with the one or more electronic programme guides (EPG) for use in identifying corresponding data content available in the network (10); and

(e) the at least one user-operable node (20) is operable to receive data content thereat corresponding to the search request.

11. A network (10) according to claim 10, wherein the electronic programme guides (EPG) and/or their associated meta-data include data pertaining to past programme data content for use in determining location data indicative of whether the programme data content is available locally in the at least one user-operable node (20) or in the plurality of nodes of the network (10).

12. A network according to claim 10 operable according to the method of claim 1.